



Australian Society for Limnology Inc.
NEWSLETTER

ASL Newsletter Volume 50 # 1
March 2012

ABN 54 606 483 226 ISSN 1037-2512

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PRESIDENT's REPORT

Welcome to another year of limnological pursuits and I hope you all had a chance to take a break. Since the last newsletter the executive have been busy with a couple of teleconferences to discuss a number of operational issues and ideas from members. Firstly, thank you to those people that responded to our request for comments on the ASL constitution and the proposed letter to FASTS regarding the role of freshwater science in policy decision-making. A revised version of the constitution is being drawn up with the intention for its distribution before the next AGM at the 51st Congress, but the timing for adopting a new constitution depends on impending changes to the Victorian legislation. Ross is compiling the responses to the on-line questionnaire and this too will be distributed to members.



On a more exciting note, we have been inundated with ideas from members for state-based activities to foster local interactions with members and to try to encourage new members to the Society. Sam Capon hosted an event in Queensland in February that brought local members together for a pub night with an international speaker. Scott Hardie and Regina Magierowski from Tasmania have put together another pub night series and have also organized a 1 day symposium on local watery issues to be held in July. Evan Harrison and Trefor Reynoldson from the ACT are in the midst of organising a Stream Bioassessment Symposium for early 2013 to honour the work of the late Richard Norris. We see these as important events for ASL to be involved with and encourage members to contact their state reps with ideas. So far, membership has risen over 25% in the last year, and the soon to be completed website, as well as ASL's 52 Facebook friends.

The 51st congress to be held in Armidale NSW from Nov 26th 2012 is progressing with Mike Reid and Melissa parsons taking on the role of chair of the local organizing committee. We have organized some student workshops on Monday 26th with Dr Rob Morrison from Flinders University providing a hands-on insight into media training for postgrads. A late afternoon field trip to some of the local wetlands (and wineries) has been planned for a mid-conference tour, with the conference dinner at another of our local wineries - we do have a lot of them. We are keen to get ideas for speakers, symposia and field trips so please contact us with any gems.

Darren Ryder
April 2012

EDITOR'S REPORT

Well the newsletter is entering its 50th year. As a part of this, we are having a revitalisation of the newsletter and the introduction of some new ideas and content. I will be helped in this endeavour by our new deputy editors:

Dr Catherine Leigh

Australian Rivers Institute
Griffith University

Sarah Mika

School of Environmental & Rural Science
University of New England
Armidale, Australia

Keely Mills

Centre for Environmental Management
School of Science, Information Technology & Engineering (SITE)
University of Ballarat (Mt Helen)

Sarah has already penned a new section **So you think you want...** (page 22)

Sarah says... "This new addition to the ASL newsletter aims to promote issues and ideas for early career watery folk, i.e. postgrads and maybe even the odd postdoc. For it to work, we need issues and ideas and my brain is simply too full to come up with all of them myself. So, if you have any suggestions, or better still, would like to write one with me, let me know. Otherwise, it'll be more of the same and I may start repeating myself. In case you were wondering, we would like these articles to be constructive as well as honest and maybe even useful, and definitely to avoid reducing anybody's future employment options (particularly mine). Unless anyone has a better idea, or worse, people complain and Ross fires me, I'm thinking the next article will be "So you think you ... want an overseas postdoc". If you actually are thinking about tackling an overseas postdoc and have items you'd like discussed (I can't promise to be helpful), or have done one (or two, or three) and have useful insights to share (specifically, things you wish you knew at the beginning, i.e. before you signed the contract), then please, gently harass me. Preferably by email (sarah.mika@une.edu.au while they let me stay).

Some really great contributions this month for the „Reports from the trenches“ (page 29) section, so thank you so much to the contributors.

Note also the summary of the ASL survey that was completed last year (page 27), which sought to determine member's opinions on making a submission to government on levels of funding for freshwater research.

Newsletter Editor: Dr Ross Thompson

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**Deadline for the next edition is the 15th
of June.**

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

ASL Australian Society for Limnology

51st Congress
Armidale, NSW
26th - 29th November, 2012

The 51st Congress of the Australian Society for Limnology will be held from November 26th to 29th, 2012. The location is set amongst the rolling hills of the New England region in NSW, so beautiful in spring. The venue is the **University of New England in Armidale**.

The theme of the conference will be ***"Life at the edge: Boundaries, ecotones and links in freshwater ecosystems"***

This theme was chosen as a rather tenuous link to the location of Armidale atop the great escarpment on the boundary between the Murray-Darling catchment and the eastward flowing coastal rivers, and also in reference to the critical role of our local independent member of the hung parliament.

Scientifically, boundaries are increasingly being shown to be important areas of productivity, diversity and process in river ecosystems.

The conference will be run over four days starting with the student workshops on Monday November 26th. These workshops will include a session on how to write a journal article and a media skills workshop. Day 2 will open with a plenary session followed by contributed presentations. The program for day 3 will feature the presentations by the ASL and Early Career Researcher Medalists as well as a first for ASL congresses – two „power sessions“ of 10 minute speed talks. These sessions are aimed at providing the opportunity for speakers to present the equivalent of rapid communications to a large audience – twice the people in half the time.

Mid conference excursion will showcase some of the local wetlands, rivers, wineries, waterfalls and, did I mention wineries?

The final day will begin with a morning of contributed sessions and the congress will close, as was the case last year, with an afternoon of themed plenary sessions, followed, of course by the congress dinner. The venue for the congress dinner is yet to be finalised, but we hope to have it at a local winery...

There will be plenty of budget accommodation available at the UNE colleges.

The call for abstracts and registration will open on May 1st and close on August 17th.

Watch for updates on the asl website (www.asl.org.au) and on the ASL facebook site [here](#). Enquiries can be directed to ASN Events (jm@asnevents.net.au) or the local organising committee

We look forward to welcoming you to Armidale in November

The local organising committee

Michael Reid (mreid24@une.edu.au)

Melissa Parsons (melissa.parsons@une.edu.au)

Darren Ryder (darren.ryder@une.edu.au)

Mark Southwell (mark.southwell@une.edu.au)

Martin Thoms (martin.thoms@une.edu.au)

Matthew Tighe (mtighe2@une.edu.au)



SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Australian Society for Limnology Congress

University of New England, Armidale NSW

26th – 30th November 2012

The 51st Congress of the Australian Society for Limnology will be held in November 2012. The location is set amongst the rolling hills of the New England region in NSW, so beautiful in spring. The venue is the University of New England in Armidale.

About the Society

The Australian Society for Limnology (ASL) is an Australian-based scientific society whose focus is the study and management of inland waters. The ASL was established in 1961, and has a current membership of around 400 scientists, managers, consultants, engineers, and postgraduate students from all states and territories. It is recognised both nationally and internationally as a leading scientific society.

Members have a strong professional interest in issues such as the maintenance of aquatic biodiversity, managing and restoring aquatic ecosystems and the wise use and sustainable management of aquatic resources. The Society also has a strong interest in fostering the scientific and intellectual development of tertiary students, particularly Honours and postgraduate students.

The Society includes members working in relevant government agencies, tertiary institutions and many industries related to aquatic resources. Through their daily activities, members have constant contact with local communities and are in an excellent position to interpret and advise on inland water issues. The ASL produces policy documents detailing the Society's position on various issues relating to river and wetland management, and plays a pivotal role in promoting science in the management of our water resources.

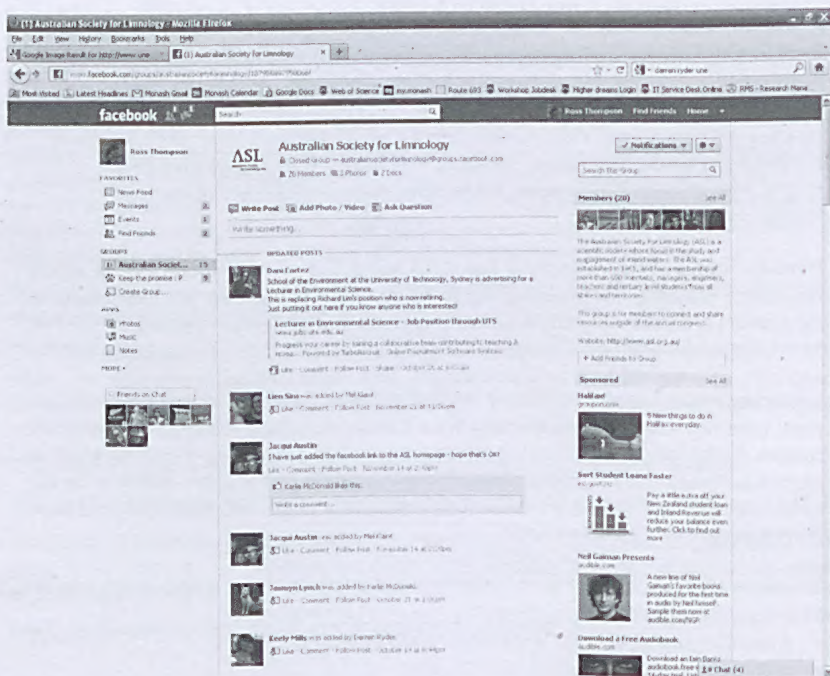
The charter of the ASL is to further our understanding of Australia's inland waters, and to promote its wise use and sustainable management. The roles of ASL are to provide:

- A forum for exchange of ideas and research results amongst scientists,
- An interface between researchers and managers,
- A venue for student development, and
- To report to State and Federal Governments on the state of inland waters.

More information about ASL is provided at: www.asl.org.au

ASL IS ONLINE ON THE INTER-WEB THINGY!!!

If you are connected you may as well be connected. The Australian Society of Limnology has been dragged kicking and screaming into the digital age, and now has a Facebook page!! If you are on Facebook, then 'friend' us. If you aren't on Facebook, here is the incentive you have always needed to join. Click [here](#) to go to Facebook now.





**International Symposium on Aquatic Oligochaeta
Fremantle, Western Australia
10 -14 September 2012**

The 12th International Symposium on Aquatic Oligochaeta will be held in Fremantle, Western Australia, in September 2012.

These symposia are held every three years and encompass all aspects of research into the biology, ecology, biodiversity and systematics of marine, estuarine and freshwater oligochaetes and some related worms.

There are over 300 species of marine and freshwater oligochaetes known from Australian marine and inland waters, though many remain undescribed and there are undoubtedly many that are undiscovered.

Poster or oral presentations from Australian aquatic researchers dealing with oligochaetes, even if they constitute only a small aspect of your research will be very welcome. Otherwise, this will be a great opportunity to learn more about these ecologically important components of aquatic communities.

In addition, a workshop on identifying Australian aquatic oligochaetes will be held on Friday 7th September, just before the symposium, with sessions run by leading taxonomists (See separate notice)

More information and registration forms are available at www.isaob12.net.au or email adrian.pinder@dec.wa.gov.au.

Australian Marine and Freshwater Oligochaete Identification Workshop

Friday 7th September 2012, Fremantle, Western Australia

A workshop on identifying Australian marine and freshwater oligochaetes will be held in Fremantle, Western Australia on Friday 7th September 2012. This workshop is timed to coincide with 12th International Symposium on Aquatic Oligochaeta (www.isaob12.net.au), which will be held over the following week.

Venue: The Esplanade Hotel, Fremantle, Western Australia.

Program: The workshop will include presentations on the diversity, anatomy, methods and identification of Australian worms by some of the world's leading oligochaete taxonomists, followed by a practical microscope session.

Presenters:

Dr Kathryn Coates (Bermuda Department of Conservation Services, Bermuda)

Prof. Christer Erséus (Dept of Zoology, University of Gothenburg, Sweden)

Mark Wetzel (Illinois Natural History Survey, Prairie Research Institute, University of Illinois, USA)

Adrian Pinder (Dept of Environment and Conservation, Western Australia)

Cost: \$170 per person. This fee includes workshop materials and morning & afternoon teas.

Registration: To register please complete the registration form for the oligochaete symposium, indicating that you wish to attend the workshop. The form will be available from December 2012 at www.isaob12.net.au.

Payment: By credit card (Visa or Mastercard) or bank transfer - see registration form for details.

More information:

Contact Adrian Pinder

Telephone: +61 (0)8 9405 5153

E-mail: adrian.pinder@dec.wa.gov.au

Further details will be provided closer to the workshop.



ASL members are warmly invited to attend the 2012 Annual Conference of the Ecological Society of Australia, which will be held at The Sebel, Albert Park in Melbourne, from 3-7 December. ESA2012 will bring together ecologists from academic, government and non-government backgrounds and will provide a valuable forum for researchers, land managers and policy makers to share advances in ecology and their implications for understanding our biosphere.

The conference theme "Ecology: Fundamental Science of the Biosphere" will "get back to basics" and focus on the scientific inquiry that underpins the discipline and the solution of environmental problems. Keynote speakers span a variety of ecosystems, including freshwater and marine, and the conference will be organised around concepts and processes rather than around habitats, ecosystems or organisms. The society is particularly keen to boost the numbers of presentations by aquatic researchers.

Visit www.esa2012.org.au for further details regarding the conference program, keynote speakers, and registration information, and we hope to see many of you there. Barbara Downes on behalf of the Local Organising Committee for ESA2012.



Centre for Water Research**Centre for Water Research Online Software Training Courses**

The Centre for Water Research (CWR) based at The University of Western Australia offers a range of process-based numerical models for simulation of the physical, chemical and biological dynamics within aquatic systems. Our software is used in over 90 countries by researchers, academics, utilities, regulatory agencies and environmental consultants. Software developed at CWR undergoes continuous development by our expert staff and through our international network of research partners to ensure that the most recent scientific and computational methods are incorporated. CWR models are designed to run on standard desktop computers at speeds of around 200 times real time for domains with the order of one million grid points.

CWR is offering two online courses of approximately three days each, designed to give students, researchers and industry professionals hands-on experience in using ELCOM (3D hydrodynamic model) and ELCOM-CAEDYM (aquatic ecology and water quality model). These models can be used for simulating estuaries, lakes, reservoirs and the coastal ocean, for eutrophication, pollution and climate change studies.

Courses will be taught by **Dr Jason Antenucci** and will commence on October 4th and run on a continuous basis.

For further information please email: training@cwr.uwa.edu.au or go to: [Click here for more details](#)



Keep up to date on environmental water news

Water for the Environment News is available twice yearly from the Office of Environment and Heritage, NSW's environmental water manager. Each edition features stories on environmental water events and actions across New South Wales.

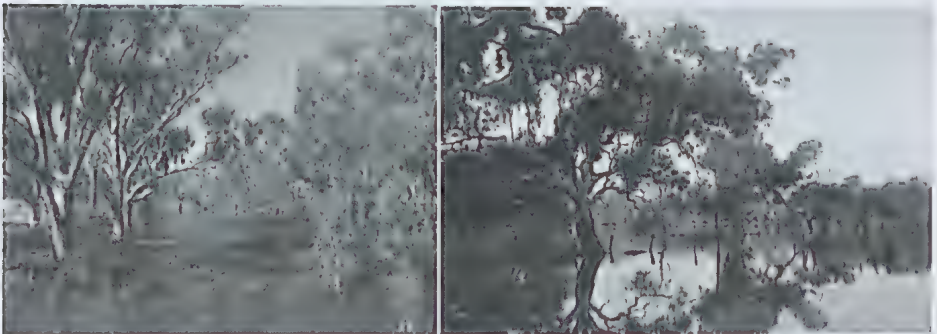
Read about:

- How wetlands and rivers are benefiting from environmental water
- Scientific studies and modelling on environmental water
- Partnerships between government, the community and other agencies
- Flora and fauna responses to flooding events
- Planned watering events
- Water policy
- Water purchased and recovered through NSW programs

The latest edition of the news is available online at:

www.environment.nsw.gov.au/environmentalwater/newsletters.htm

To subscribe to the newsletter, send „Subscribe" to
water.news@environment.nsw.gov.au



LEFT: Cochran Creek in May 2011 during a trial watering event. Photo: Emma Wilson/OEH

RIGHT: Dry Lake in June 2011 after 150GL of environmental water was released into the Murrumbidgee and Murray River systems. Photo: James Maguire/OEH

JOB VACANCIES



Senior Environmental Consultant – Freshwater Ecology

*Are you looking for a refreshing and challenging role in science and consultancy?
Do you wish to make a difference to the state of the natural environment?
Can you see yourself managing a diverse range of complex and invigorating projects?
Do you want the opportunity to work with new and innovative ideas?
Are you looking for a move to another part of the world?*

If the answer is yes to any or all of the above then we want to talk to you!

Golder Associates (NZ) Limited (Golder) is seeking a Senior Environmental Consultant to be located in our Christchurch office in New Zealand.

The role will require you to work within the Golder ecology team to provide freshwater and other ecology consulting services to private and public sector clients. A key area of work and responsibility will be in providing technical advice regarding environmental flows. In particular, the role will involve establishing and monitoring environmental flows, providing advice to clients on the impacts of different flow regimes, the impact on groundwater-surface water resources and the preparation of Environmental Impact Assessments. Knowledge and experience of the concept and practicalities of establishing environmental flows is desirable. The role will also require involvement in a wide range of freshwater ecological issues and initiatives both regionally and nationally. From time to time there may be a requirement to appear as an expert in front of decision-making authorities so experience of preparing expert evidence and as an expert witness is also desirable. The successful applicant will be expected to work closely with other disciplines and teams within Golder to build an enterprising business of technical advice on overall freshwater management in New Zealand.

An understanding of the Resource Management Act (1991), the regional planning process and the application of science to the development of regional policy and plans will also be an advantage.

Additional requirements of the role include:

- MSc or PhD in an appropriate discipline.
- At least 5 and preferably 10 years work experience in the field.
- Excellent writing, communication and analytical skills.
- Strong project management skills.
- Experience in providing expert evidence at resource consent hearings or at Environment Court would be advantageous.
- Experience in reviewing and interpreting technical and scientific reports.
- Experience in the preparation and presentation of assessments of effects on the environment.

Golder is a multi-disciplinary consulting firm providing environmental, engineering, and mining services to a broad range of clients nationally and internationally. We are an employee-owned company of over 160 offices worldwide that has developed since 1960 into an internationally award-winning working culture.

Golder has a strong health and safety culture; we take pride in our ability to offer challenging roles and a multitude of opportunities for international exposure. We take the career development and engagement of our staff seriously and offer staff a local role and global career.

To apply for the role please click [HERE](#)



12th International Symposium on Aquatic Oligochaeta

Fremantle, Western Australia
10-14 September 2012

Researchers with an interest in marine and inland water oligochaetes are invited to this 12th international symposium

Scope: The meeting will bring together scientists from around the world to discuss the latest in aquatic oligochaete research. Previous symposia have covered a very wide range of disciplines including systematics, conservation, physiology, ecology, toxicology, wastewater treatment and biological monitoring. We expect this meeting to be as diverse.

Conference location: The Esplanade Hotel in the centre of Fremantle. Fremantle is a historic and multicultural port city located at the mouth of the Swan River, near Perth in south-western Australia.

Program: Oral and poster scientific sessions, microscopy session, identification workshop, day excursion to Rottnest Island and symposium dinner

Website: www.isaob12.net.au

Registration: Form available late 2011.

Contact: Adrian Pinder
ph +61 (0)8 94055153
adrian.pinder@dec.wa.gov.au



Department of Environment and Conservation
Western Australia

STUDENT ANNOUNCEMENTS



\$10 000 pa Doctoral Scholarship Top-Up

Study with the Institute for Applied Ecology and you could be one of the best paid PhD students in Australia!

IAE Scholarship

The Institute for Applied Ecology (IAE) Doctoral Scholarship Top-Up is competitively awarded as a 'top-up' of up to \$10 000 per annum for IAE PhD candidates who hold a stipend from any other source. This stipend could be from a University of Canberra scholarship, an employment scholarship or an international scholarship.

1st Class Honours Students – Pay special Attention!

If you received a 1st Class Honours award or equivalent from an Australian University, you may be eligible to receive an Australian Postgraduate Award scholarship from the University of Canberra (UC APA scholarship), worth \$22 700pa, tax free. With this UC APA, and a relevant honours degree, you will be eligible to apply for the IAE Top-Up to receive up to \$32 700 pa while you undertake your doctoral studies in Applied Ecology¹.

Other eligibility requirements

To be awarded the IAE scholarship top-up, all applicants need to be enrolled at the University of Canberra as a full-time doctoral student and have a project and a supervisor at the IAE².

About the IAE

The IAE is a research and teaching institute that produce work of international standing. IAE researchers hold distinctive strengths in basic and applied science, including in the following areas:

- Catchment systems
- Conservation biology
- Ecological health assessment
- Environmental chemistry
- Freshwater ecology
- Natural resource policy and planning
- Population modelling
- Sex determination and evolutionary biology
- Vegetation and wildlife management
- Wildlife genetics

¹For more information on the UC APA, see: <http://www.canberra.edu.au/research-students/scholarships/domestic-scholarships2>

²For information about potential PhD projects, see: <http://www.canberra.edu.au/centres/iae/potential-phd-projects.php>

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University of Canberra, ACT, 2601, Australia
Phone: +61 (2) 6201 2795 Website: www.appliedecology.edu.au
Email: IAEAdmin@canberra.edu.au



**UNIVERSITY OF
CANBERRA**

Master of Integrated Water Management

Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma

Full-time and part-time/distance

In the complex world of climate change and population growth, water professionals can no longer focus on a single aspect of water management. Solving water-related problems requires technical and scientific expertise and greater understanding and integration of environmental, social and political factors.

Program structure (Full-time)



For part-time/distance see www.watercentre.org/education/programs/part-time

Qualification from four leading universities

Students enrol at The University of Queensland (Brisbane). The program is managed by IWC and delivered by lecturers from all IWC member universities. Upon graduation students receive a co-bedged qualification.



Three of our member universities are ranked in the top 100 universities of the world in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings.

Great incentives to enrol

- Field trips (Western Australia, Stredbroke Island and others) are included in the tuition fees.
- Masters and Dipome students receive \$1,000 toward professional development.
- Masters students also receive up to \$1,000 to support their third semester project.

Practical and applied components

The program builds on students' professional experience to approach water-related problems holistically

- **Lecture modules** teach knowledge and skills across a wide range of disciplines.
- **Team projects** allow students to apply their knowledge to real case studies in Australia and overseas.
- **Field visits** throughout Australia complement project work and give students first-hand water system experience and knowledge.
- **Network building** encourages students to establish links through the IWC's network of national and international specialists.
- **Skills development** allows students to gain practical skills to analyse and solve water-related problems.

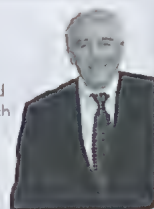
Our graduates will acquire

- **Communication skills** across disciplines and sectors, and sciences and policy
- **Systems thinking skills** for the whole-of-water cycle
- **Collaboration skills** for cross-sectoral teamwork
- **Problem-solving skills** for complex issues requiring difficult tradeoffs
- **Risk assessment and planning skills** to devise sustainable solutions
- **Adaptive and reflexive learning skills**, i.e. an ability to learn by doing and applying context-specific solutions.

Paul Greenfield, AO

Vice Chancellor
The University of Queensland

There are no courses in Australia, and very few internationally, that take such an integrated approach to teaching and learning about water management.



MINUTES FROM ASL EXECUTIVE TELECONFERENCE

Australian Society for Limnology Teleconference 28 November 2011

ASL executive teleconference, 20 February 2012

Present: D.Ryder, J. Moir, E. Turak, B. Downes, K. Aldridge, E. Harrison, E. Garcia, B. Robson, D. Green, R. Marchant

Apologies: D. Baldwin, R. Lester, S. Capon, S. Hardie, J. O'Connor, T. Mackintosh

1. Conference update:

Dates and timetable for this year's conference will be sent to ASN this week. The chairman of the local organising committee is M.Reid with M.Parsons and D.Ryder and various students helping. The dates for the meeting are 26 to 29 Nov 2012, with papers beginning on 27 Nov. Four lecture theatres have been booked. Discounted accommodation will be available at university colleges for about \$30 bed and breakfast. A venue for the conference dinner is still being sought. On 26 Nov it has been suggested that a postgraduate workshop be held before the student mixer. Andrew Boulton has offered to give a talk on „how to write a paper“ and it is possible that a talk about how to deal with the media can be arranged.

2. Constitution review:

Eleven comments on proposed changes to the constitution have been received so far. (Comments will be received until the beginning of March). D. Ryder and D.Baldwin will incorporate these comments into a document outlining suggested changes which will be sent to the executive before the next teleconference in May.

3. State initiatives:

Tasmanian members will be running pub nights again this year and S. Capon staged a similar event for Qld members on Feb 14. This was attended by 18 members who thought it was very successful. Sam will produce a report on this event for the newsletter. Pub nights have been attempted in Sydney but NSW members are too scattered for sufficient numbers to attend. E. Turak suggested instead that a day workshop might be held where government and academic researchers in NSW discuss current projects of interest to both groups. He suggested that if this were to happen then it would be useful to share documents and

wondered whether the ASL website could be used for this purpose. J. Moir (from ASN) felt that this would be possible with help from the IT person at ASN. She will investigate the possibilities.

4. Submission to STA (formerly FASTS) on status of freshwater science and funding:

R.Thompson has not been able to be contacted about this matter and no news is forthcoming.

(ED: See results of survey below)

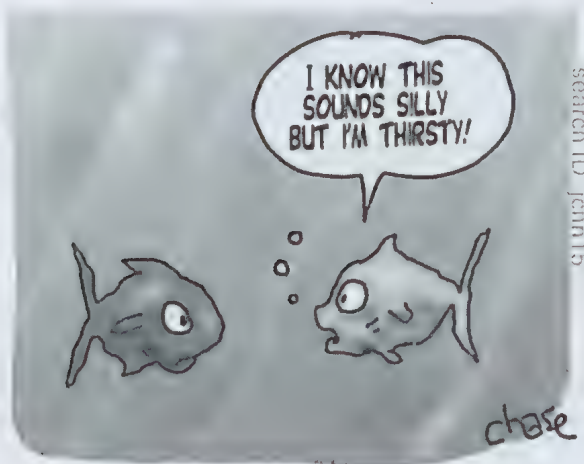
5. Newsletter report:

No news has been received about how many newsletters are likely to be produced this year (3 or 4?) or whether the editor has received any help from those who volunteered at the Brisbane meeting.

6. Other business:

(a) Science meets parliament (SMP): this is on again in March. Anyone who wishes to attend on behalf of the ASL should notify D.Ryder now.

(b) Membership numbers: at the beginning of 2012 the ASL had 364 members, an increase on the 290 registered at the time of the Brisbane conference.



SO YOU THINK YOU....*

... want an interdisciplinary PhD

** This new addition to the ASL newsletter aims to promote issues and ideas for early career watery folk, i.e. postgrads and maybe even the odd postdoc. For it to work, we need issues and ideas and my brain is simply too full to come up with all of them myself. So, if you have any suggestions, or better still, would like to write one with me, let me know. Otherwise, it'll be more of the same and I may start repeating myself. In case you were wondering, we would like these articles to be constructive as well as honest and maybe even useful, and definitely to avoid reducing anybody's future employment options (particularly mine). Unless anyone has a better idea, or worse, people complain and Ross fires me, I'm thinking the next article will be "So you think you ... want an overseas postdoc". If you actually are thinking about tackling an overseas postdoc and have items you'd like discussed (I can't promise to be helpful), or have done one (or two, or three) and have useful insights to share (specifically, things you wish you knew at the beginning, i.e. before you signed the contract), then please, gently harass me. Preferably by email (sarah.mika@une.edu.au while they let me stay).*

Interdisciplinary: (in·ter·dis·ci·pli·nar·y, *adj.*) Of, relating to, or involving two or more academic, scientific, or artistic disciplines that are usually considered distinct.

Interdisciplinary. It's a great word, that. Seven syllables holding so much promise, so much hope, so much menace. In reality, most aquatic ecology research incorporates elements of multiple disciplines such as geomorphology, hydrology, chemistry, taxonomy, and biology, and that's before the data are analysed and modelled (strictly defined as „multidisciplinary“, or at best „crossdisciplinary“; see Table 1 in Morse *et al.* 2007 for an excellent summary of the plethora of prefixes and what they mean). Interdisciplinary research involves more integration in the research question(s), theory, epistemology, methods and products, typically via organised collaboration. In theory, it seems an ideal approach for tackling complex ecological issues: harnessing the best tools of relevant scientific disciplines while rationally discarding their assumptions, biases, and theoretical and methodological constraints. Unsurprisingly, although the literature advocating greater interdisciplinarity extends more than 80 years (since 1929; MacMynowski 2007), success remains notoriously elusive (Pennington 2008). That hasn't stopped interdisciplinarity from occasionally popping up in PhD programs. So, between naively signing away the next three years (plus some) of your life or heading for the hills to stockpile garlic, there must be some rational guidelines for deciding whether to launch into an interdisciplinary PhD project. You won't find them here; but it's a starting point based on unequal parts of reading the literature, personal experience and haphazardly accosting postgrads and academics between my desk and the coffee supply.

There are three possible formats for conducting interdisciplinary research:

The superstar approach. One person – that's you – does it all. I couldn't find a single example in the literature of where this had occurred, possibly because no one has attempted or survived it. Interdisciplinary research is a social or team effort (Pickett *et al.* 1999, Turner and Carpenter 1999), in which the sum is greater than the individual parts (i.e. individual disciplines; Likens 1998). The most likely outcome of attempting this approach is that depth will be sacrificed for breadth (Morse *et al.* 2007), much like a shotgun sacrifices range and accuracy for localised splatter. Recognise that this project, if concluded, will be interdisciplinary on paper only.

The Prius approach. There's a group who kind of work together but everybody is a little bit interdisciplinary and a little bit autonomous. Cooperation (working together for individual ends) will produce very different research products to collaboration (working together for a common good; Jeffrey 2003). However, this approach has several important advantages for the PhD student: (1) it minimizes risk to the individual student as the success or otherwise of the PhD is solely up to the individual; (2) the time commitments are less for project planning, the never-ending reading pile, and in collecting, analysing and synthesising the data; and (3) it minimises emotional investment in the team by focussing on the individual project, potentially insulating against dysfunctional team environments. Disadvantages include: (1) the missed opportunity of not learning how to contribute to successful interdisciplinary research; (2) one person's brilliant idea becomes another person's nightmare through insufficient or ineffective communication, especially if working at common field sites; and (3) students, projects and disciplines are more likely to be isolated through personality clashes and power imbalances, with less opportunity to deal transparently and conscientiously with the underlying issues (MacMynowski 2007, Pennington 2008). These disadvantages are likely to increase if the project team are geographically and/or institutionally fragmented (Nicolson *et al.* 2002).

The cast-of-thousands approach. It really is a collaborative research project. One of the most common refrains in the literature is that projects underestimate how much time it takes to cross discipline boundaries, develop a common vision and build functional relationships (Ryder *et al.* 2008). For the PhD student, there needs to be clear ownership of ideas and data, and without enforced policies of data management and authorship, the balance of collegiality and pragmatism can be difficult. Additionally, collaborative interdisciplinary projects are usually focused on building and maintaining stakeholder participation. For PhD students, this may mean extra time commitments and project reporting. Prepare for the process of collaboration by reading the project's strategic plan and the interdisciplinary literature. Talk to people who have experience in interdisciplinary collaborations; the tricks and traps revealed in informal discussions (perhaps lubricated) may never be revealed in everlasting print, but being aware of their existence may save some heartache and accelerated ageing.

So, what are some key components you should see in any proposed interdisciplinary collaboration? Firstly, the project leaders ideally have experience in interdisciplinary collaborations, are committed and motivated, and demonstrate the personal and scientific qualities required for collaborative research, and the organisational structure of the project must support their role (Fazey *et al.* 2005, Pennington 2008). Secondly, you can work with the people involved (see Table 3.2 in Boulton and others (2008) for the personal attributes that are important to successful interdisciplinary collaborations). Thirdly, adequate resources are committed to the process and products of interdisciplinarity, particularly in the project planning phase (Jeffrey 2003), and the project has a practical plan for managing interdisciplinary collaboration, including clear policies regarding responsibilities, accountabilities, timelines, data management and authorship (Campbell 2005, Morse *et al.* 2007). It rarely occurs serendipitously and probably never when individual disciplinary success will be accepted at the cost of collaborative success (Durfee *et al.* 2004). Fourthly, the project has a commitment to investing in training researchers in interdisciplinary collaboration (Morse *et al.* 2007). If these components are present, then being involved in interdisciplinary collaboration is a privileged education and the extra investments of time and emotional and intellectual energy are generously repaid with what you gain in professional and personal relationships, and the breadth and depth of personal and scientific understanding.

In a nut shell...

Having not quite finished an almost interdisciplinary PhD, I'll be honest: I would do it again because the science is the least of what I've learnt, but there are scars and I feel old. Here are some things (in no particular order) I wish I'd known before I signed up:

1. There is a lot of reading and dialogue required to become fluent in multiple disciplines and that takes time (Morse *et al.* 2007). Unfortunately for postgrads, this needs to happen at the beginning of the project, making it difficult to contribute to the planning phase. Be prepared that it will take longer than your independent colleagues to develop a coherent research plan.
2. Collaboration demands more time and can cause more emotional strain than working alone (Golde and Gallagher 1999). If you don't believe me, think back to undergraduate group assignments. Collaboration doesn't magically become easier when the game goes longer and the stakes get higher. Collaboration takes time, commitment to the process and the products, patience, perseverance, honesty, trust and



responsibility (Naiman 1999). This isn't meant as dissuasion, but rather, advocating that potential collaborators anticipate and prepare for these challenges and have reasonable expectations of the process and products (Campbell 2005). On the flip side, you get to walk away with battle-hardened resilience, which is a quality well worth acquiring.

3. If your supervisors haven't been involved previously in similar interdisciplinary work, it becomes more important to build and nurture your own network of experts. This is particularly relevant where your project involves disciplines rarely traversed by your supervisors. Your expert network will assist with Point #1, but these relationships take time to develop (Golde and Gallagher 1999).
4. Seriously consider whether you are personally capable of and committed to collaboration and/or interdisciplinarity. Not everyone is (Jeffrey 2003, Morse *et al.* 2007). Ideally, this should count in the selection process as much as research ability. However, negative personality traits often emerge during the process and can destabilize the entire project. Selecting the right people for the team is as important as selecting the appropriate questions, tools and scales (Cottingham 2002, Boulton *et al.* 2008). Assertiveness is essential both for your personal success and the overall project's success; there will be conflict and how it is handled will determine much of the overall team's success.
5. "Most of the social scientists are discussing the means of interdisciplinarity without an end in sight whereas the biophysical scientists are ardently promoting an end without deeper consideration of the means involved" (MacMynowski 2007: 4). From the beginning, invest in learning the process. If it were easy, there would be more success stories. Don't waste the last 80 years of literature by stumbling into the same causes of project failure: the personal and societal costs are too great.

In case you want to read more...

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Nicolson C.R., Starfield A.M., Kofinas G.P. and Kruse J.A. (2002) Ten heuristics for interdisciplinary modeling projects. *Ecosystems* 5, 376-384. DOI: 10.1007/s10021-001-0081-5.

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Ryder D.S., Brierley G., Hobbs R., Kyle G. and Leishman M. (2008) Vision generation: what do we seek to achieve in river rehabilitation? In: *River Futures: An Integrative Scientific Approach to River Repair* (eds G.J. Brierley and K.A. Fryirs) pp. 16-27. Island Press, Washington.

Turner M.G. and Carpenter S.R. (1999) Tips and traps in interdisciplinary research. *Ecosystems* 2, 275-276.

RESULTS OF ASL SURVEY

We recently completed a survey of members to develop a representation from the ASL to federal government surrounding the issue of federal funding for freshwater research and training.

Thanks to all respondents.

89 people responded to the first set of questions.

Do you think that there are existing and new challenges faced in freshwater ecology and management that are the responsibility of the Australian federal government?

Yes	89	(100%)
No	0	(0%)

Do you think that there is a need for new federal institutional and funding arrangements targeted at improving the science underpinning freshwater research?

Yes	70	(90%)
No	8	(9%)
No response	1	(1%)

Do you think that current opportunities and levels of federal funding for freshwater research are adequate?

Yes	7	(8%)
No	81	(91%)
No response	1	(1%)

Do you support ASL sending an open letter to the federal government (Ministers for Sustainability, Environment and Water and for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research), outlining concerns over water institutions and research funding?

Yes	83	(93%)
No	6	(7%)

Do you think the letter should be sent to anyone else?

Prime Minister	Shadow ministers
Independent MPs	SEWPAC
Major newspapers	Treasurer
Minister for Climate Change and Energy	MDBA
Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	
State Ministers for Water	
Australian Vice Chancellors Committee	

71 people responded to the second survey, which asked respondents to settle on the letter's text. The following incorporates the majority of comments

Preamble: The Australian Society for Limnology is the peak scientific society for inland waters in Australia, and includes amongst its members researchers, managers, educators, policy makers, consultants and students.

Management of Australia's inland waters requires policy and training that is based on excellent scientific research. The investments in the Cooperative Research Centres, CSIRO Water for a Healthy Country, Land and Water Australia, the National Water Commission and through the ARC programs have generated considerable knowledge of our freshwater ecosystems. However there is an urgent need to continue these investments to meet current policy and management demands, and to continue to build our fundamental understanding.

At the most recent meeting of the Australian Society for Limnology in Brisbane, a number of concerns were raised with respect to the ongoing management and funding of freshwater science in Australia. A subsequent survey has compiled those concerns as follows.

The discontinuation of Land and Water Australia and uncertainty surrounding the future of the National Water Commission makes it unclear who is strategically coordinating freshwater research in Australia. There is an urgent need for clarity about which agency will coordinate freshwater research and facilitate adoption of that research.

The end of the majority of CRC investments in freshwater research, together with the discontinuation of Land and Water Australia, means that there is now a lack of research investment in this area. While there are current investments in the CSIRO Flagships and the ARC, the overall investment in freshwater science is reduced.

We wish to identify the urgent need for investment in freshwater sciences in Australia in order to meet the demands of environmental management and policy development, and to train young scientists and managers for future challenges in this area.

We strongly suggest that Water is identified as a priority issue in the funding of future ARC Centres, Discovery and Linkage Grants and Special Research Initiative. This could include the identification of freshwater research as a National Research Priority.

While we recognise the considerable financial constraints under which governments operate, the issue of managing freshwater in Australia looms large as the challenge for the next decade. The Australian Society of Limnology expresses our desire to work with the government to ensure that our understanding of inland waters continues to grow and inform management and policy.

The results of the survey will be discussed at the next ASL Teleconference to decide on the next step.

REPORTS FROM THE TRENCHES

Tasmanian report

The year is well under way now, so we are getting Tas ASL activities for 2012 pencilled into people's diaries/digital doohickies. As mentioned late last year, this year we Tas folk plan to hold the usual pub nights and also a 1-day forum. Below are some brief details about these events, including important dates.



Tas ASL pub nights

The 2012 pub series will be held at the same venue which has been used in recent years, the Duke of Wellington Hotel, 192 Macquarie St (cnr Barrack St), Hobart. The pub nights will be on the first Monday of the month, and the dates for the pub nights will be: **May 7, June 4, August 6 and September 3**. Note there will be no pub night in July; instead the forum will occur early in the month (see below).

We currently have a presenter lined up for the May pub night (**John Morrongiello**, CSIRO, Hobart), but will be looking for presenters for the other nights, so please let me know if you are interested in presenting at one of our pub nights. Inter-state visitors would be most welcome!

Tas ASL forum

The inaugural (well it will be inaugural if it is successful!), Tasmanian ASL forum will be held at the Derwent Sailing Squadron rooms, 23 Marieville Esp, Sandy Bay, Hobart on Wednesday **July 11**. The aim of the forum will be to allow local ASL"ers to: 1) present their work to others, 2) learn about what is going on locally, and 3) catch-up with colleagues during the course of a day in a relaxed atmosphere. Hopefully, the daytime fixture of the forum will be favourable to Tas ASL"ers who find it difficult to attend the pub nights. Again, inter-state visitors would be most welcome, so let me know if you would like to attend the forum. **Regina Magierowski** (University of Tasmania) has kindly volunteered to help me organise the forum. Reg and I are currently working out the finer details of the forum, which is shaping up to be a great event.

Scott Hardie

Freshwater ecology and management theme
Research Institute for the Environment and Livelihoods



Michael Douglas is keeping busy as director of the NERP Northern Australia Hub - one of only five research hubs established under the National Environmental Research Program. He continues to work on TRaCK (Tropical Rivers and Coastal Knowledge) synthesis with **Amy Kimber** which the National Water Commission provided funds for, to undertake synthesis and adoption activities from April 2011 to the end of March 2012, with the goal of increasing the uptake and impact of TRaCK research outcomes.

Six products/topic areas were identified as a focus for the synthesis and adoption activities:

1. Interactive web-based classification tool for the TRaCK Digital Atlas
2. Decision support tools for tropical river catchments (MSE)
3. Indigenous enterprises and water planning
4. Indigenous engagement in water research
5. Monitoring river health in the wet-dry tropics
6. Environmental flows tools for the wet-dry tropics

Work is now underway with staff from the Federal, WA, NT and Qld governments, and a wider group of stakeholders to develop meaningful and useable products from TRaCK research.

If you are interested in knowing more about any of these projects or TRaCK's research findings, please contact Knowledge & Adoption Coordinator Amy Kimber on (08) 8946 7619 or email amy.kimber@cdu.edu.au.

We welcome newcomers to our group **David Crook** and **Alison King**. Both are in joint positions with RIEL and NT Fisheries. Alison and David have come from the Arthur Rylah Institute for Environmental Research in Victoria, and are starting to slowly adapt to the heat and humidity! David will be working on a NERP Northern Australia Hub project examining fish movement and population connectivity in the Daly River. Alison will work on the highly successful Daly River Fish and Flows project, and will also look for some funky fishy and flowy things to keep her occupied in the longer term!

Erica Garcia is working on manuscripts and dreaming of the dry season and getting into the field again to conduct some collaborative experiments with **Simon Townsend** examining controls on primary productivity in the Daly River. Michael, Erica and Simon will also be attending the ESA meeting in Portland, OR, USA this August.

Danielle Warfe continues to work with us from the Hobart office and is also hard at work on manuscripts.

Peter Novak has changed roles and is now 12 months into his PhD program examining "The ecology and management of *Macrobrachium spinipes* in

Northern Australia". He is currently conducting a 12 month field survey and had to return early from this month's trip due to the threat of some major flooding!

Erica Garcia

ACTFR-TropWATER

The Australian Centre for Tropical Freshwater Research (ACTFR) began operations in 1987 and in late 2011, combined with a range of water researchers from across JCU to form a new, larger centre, to be known as TropWATER. This is the short name of the centres official title - Centre for Tropical Water and Aquatic Ecosystem Research.



ACTFR/TropWATER have been recruiting recently. We welcome as new staff for 2012, Trent Power, from Qld Fisheries, **Dr. Dominique O'Brien** (ecotoxicologist with recent PhD from UQ), **Dr. Nathan Waltham** (aquatic ecologist with PhD 2009 from Griffith University) and **Dr. Caroline Petus** (remote sensing) to our team. We also welcome new associates **Dr. Collette Thomas** (ecological risk assessment, Bayesian belief modelling), **Dr. Jennifer DeBose** (chemical-based animal behaviour), **Dr. Kathy Burns** (marine chemistry and hydrocarbon ecology) and **Dr. Jane Mellors** (seagrass).

We recently completed our project on the North Australian Water Future Assessment (NAWFA) Ecological Assets project, with CSIRO and UWA. Our component included a review of available stream water temperature in northern Australia and the beginnings of an experimental temperature tolerance testing program. This builds upon our experimental work on hypoxia tolerance in recent years. Preliminary testing showed several fish and macrocrustacean species to not be that tolerant to high water temperatures, mostly losing equilibrium around 38-40C. Even spotted tilapia, an African invasive noted for thermal tolerance, were less tolerant than barramundi. Nearly 11,000 temperature records from 550 locations across northern Australia were compiled as well as 904,000 readings from temperature loggers, with a highest value of 44C. Though without specifically funding for it, we are continuing with this testing on a casual basis.

After the big floods of 2011, our annual wet season flood event sampling program has been relatively quiet thus far this year but current rain from a series of tropical lows at the time of writing look set to change all that. This work is part of our Catchment to Reef Runoff program, now gainfully occupying 10 staff.

Damien Burrows
Director-TropWATER

Murray Darling Wetlands Ltd



Rhonda Sinclair took up a position as Program Manager with Murray Darling Wetlands Ltd in late February and joins **Deb Nias** (Chief Executive Officer). She is currently managing a project at Carrs, Cappitts and Bunberoo Creeks which are located on the floodplain of the Taroo Group of Reserves, within the Lock 8 and 9 reach of the Murray River (south) and Frenchmans Creek (north), approximately 45km west of Wentworth, NSW.

There are numerous River Red Gum and Black Box dominated ephemeral wetlands associated with these creeks. The natural hydrology of the wetlands has been interrupted by river regulation and the installation of nine structures (concrete fords and rock levee banks). The wetlands now only receive flows from Frenchmans Creek during periods of high flow either by overtopping structures and/or syphoning. The 2010-11 high flows in the Murray River resulted in significant flooding of the creeks and the surrounding floodplain.

Murray Darling Wetlands Ltd. (MDW) (an initiative of the NSW Murray Wetlands Working Group Inc.) has begun the rehabilitation of this area, which will be achieved primarily through the upgrading of structures to accommodate SA Water easement and fish passage. A number of the existing structures have the potential of being modified which could improve flow management throughout the system, across the floodplain and into associated wetlands.

High flows in the northern part of the Murray-Darling Basin indicate the project area may become flooded within the next few months and a fish survey, to provide a „snapshot“ of fish communities in the region has been undertaken by MDFRC (Iain Ellis) and CPS Environmental Research (Clayton Sharpe) to assist with future investigations into the fish community.

We will provide updates along the way.

Rhonda Sinclair

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Department of Resource Management and Geography,

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THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

Barbara Downes has just completed the first field season for an ARC grant with lead CI, **Jill Lancaster**.

This study explores the colonisation of habitat patches by macroinvertebrate larvae. Different dispersal modes (drifting, crawling) are compared to determine the role of invertebrate drift in setting population distributions. This study takes place in Hughes Creek, one of the „Granite Creeks“ in central Victoria.

Ashley Macqueen has uprooted and moved to Sydney, perhaps to avoid Barb's wrath following his door-prize winning effort at the 2011 congress in Brisbane. Ash is busy writing in his new hometown, but eager for casual or part-time employment (hint, hint ASL members in Sydney). Ash's PhD thesis will be titled „Oviposition preferences of lotic caddisflies drive substrate limitation of egg supply in the sand bed streams of the Strathbogie Ranges“.

William Bovill has completed the final field season for his PhD supervised by Barbara Downes and Jill Lancaster. This year Wim studied the drift behaviour of newly hatched caddis larvae, and the impacts of egg-eating micro-caddis larvae on egg supply for multiple caddisfly species. Wim is now head down writing his thesis, and will attend the SFS conference in Louisville Kentucky this May.

Tony Lovell has been studying the factors driving the distribution of the several lineages of *Paratya* in streams of the Melbourne region for his PhD studies with Chris Walsh and Adam Miller.

Work continues apace on an ARC-funded project looking at ecological responses to environmental flows in Victoria led by **Mike Stewardson, Ian Rutherford** and **Angus Webb**. This project begins its first world tour in May, with team members delivering presentations at five international conferences across three continents by October. Together with regional, state and federal water managers, this group is also looking at ways of better aligning the disparate environmental flows monitoring programs around the country, and will hold a national workshop on this topic in December just after the ASL congress. Stay tuned.

Congratulations are due to **Joe Greet**, who submitted his PhD thesis on the effects of the timing of flow peaks on riparian vegetation assemblages in late February. Joe has since embarked upon a relaxing holiday, taking in the elections in Burma. We pray for your safe return, if only to get those last two data chapters submitted as papers.

Following the demise of eWater CRC research funding, **Angus Webb** and **Sue Nichols** (University of Canberra) have been promoting the use of the Eco Evidence tools for systematic literature review to state and federal management agencies, and trying to build the methods into new research projects. Angus and Sue are also continuing our collaboration with the USEPA and EU-funded researchers to develop an international standard for evidence synthesis in environmental science.

Chris Walsh has joined forces with **Tim Fletcher**, who has joined the department as an ARC Future Fellow, and moved most of the activities of their research team to the pleasant surrounds of the Burnley Campus (although they are still often spotted at Parkville). Their primary focus remains the Little Stringybark Creek Project, which has now amassed 10 years of ecological data from their main study creek, together with 3 urban control streams, and 3 forested reference streams in the Dandenong Ranges. In the last few years, they have gained the funding required to retrofit a large proportion of the stormwater drainage system of the catchment of Little Stringybark Creek, and have been busy installing stormwater retention and harvesting systems at a range of scales on private and public land across the catchment, and are hoping for a sufficient hydrologic and water quality change to elicit ecological response in the next few years. The hydrologists of the team have been busy instrumenting the sub-tributaries and lots of the treatment systems. Ecologists on the team are: **Sam Imberger**, who joined the team on completing her PhD last year, and is now running the ecological monitoring program; with **Rob James**, who has returned to the fold after 9 years of being a sparkie; and **Julia White** who is entering the final stages of her PhD on the project, looking at the relative effects of riparian forest and catchment-scale influences on macroinvertebrate communities of Little Stringybark Creek. Before Sam arrived, **Rhiannon Birch** was running the ecological monitoring program: Rhi left the group last year, but has been continuing to help out casually in a number of areas, including macroinvertebrate sample processing with **Alena Glaister**.

Christopher J Walsh

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